

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND NEED**

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The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop and periodically revise its Resource Management Plans (RMPs), which guide management of BLM-administered public lands. The BLM Field Office (FO) in Monticello, Utah, is revising the San Juan RMP, which was last updated in 1991. The new RMP, called the Monticello RMP, will provide planning guidance for public lands managed by the Monticello FO in San Juan and Grand Counties in southeastern Utah.

The Monticello planning area (PA) includes approximately 4.5 million acres of private, State of Utah, Indian reservation, national forest, national park, and BLM-administered public lands. Within the PA, BLM manages approximately 1.8 million surface acres and nearly 2.5 million subsurface acres. The Monticello PA lies almost entirely within San Juan County, with a small portion in southern Grand County. The Proposed Plan was crafted from the five alternatives presented in the Draft RMP/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) released to the public for a 90-day comment period on November 2, 2007.

### **1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN**

#### **1.1.1 PURPOSE**

The purpose of the RMP is to provide a comprehensive framework for BLM management of public lands within the PA and allocation of resources pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained-yield requirements of the FLPMA, which stipulates that the BLM "develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land-use plans" (43 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1712 [a]). Revising the plan has allowed the BLM to reevaluate, with public involvement, existing conditions, resources, and uses and determine how to allocate resources and make management decisions that balance uses against resource protection. The planning process identified a reasonable range of possible management alternatives in the DEIS. This Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes and evaluates the Proposed Plan. The DEIS disclosed and assessed the direct, indirect, and cumulative impact of reasonably foreseeable future actions resulting from the management decisions in each alternative as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), its implementing regulations, and other applicable law. The analysis of the alternatives in the draft is also carried forward into this FEIS.

The resulting Monticello RMP will establish consolidated guidance, updated objectives, and management actions for BLM-administered public lands in the PA. The RMP will be comprehensive in nature and will address issues that have been identified through agency, interagency, and public scoping, as well as respond to comments on the DEIS.

#### **1.1.2 NEED**

The plan revision is necessary to allow the BLM to review the management of public lands comprehensively and inventory their resources and, with public involvement, to make decisions for managing those lands and their resources and allocating present and future uses. The revised plan will incorporate new information, changes in resources and their uses, and new policies, guided by multiple-use and sustained-yield principles in the FLPMA.

A Special Evaluation Report, completed in 2001 by the BLM, showed that a revision to the 1991 RMP was necessary to address changes in resource uses such as increased visitation, different types of recreation activities, and the growing demand for energy development. The guidance and regulations of several resource programs have changed since the 1991 RMP was approved, and these changes need to be considered and implemented.

## 1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE MONTICELLO FO PLANNING AREA

Of the approximate 4.5 million acres in the Monticello PA in southeastern Utah, the Monticello FO administers 1,785,127 surface acres of public lands (see Map 1) and nearly 2.5 million subsurface acres. The Monticello PA lies primarily within San Juan County, although a small portion extends into Grand County to the north.

The Monticello PA includes within its boundaries a number of national parks, national monuments, and lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Canyonlands National Park lies along the northwestern portion of the PA boundary; Natural Bridges National Monument lies in its southwestern part; and a large unit of the Manti-La Sal National Forest lies in the center. Land ownership within the PA consists primarily of large blocks of BLM-administered public land interspersed with smaller, privately owned tracts and land owned by the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). The McCracken Split Estate is jointly administered by the BLM and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and all of the land south of the San Juan River is Navajo Nation Reservation. Table 1.1 shows land ownership and corresponding acreages within the Monticello PA.

**Table 1.1. Land Ownership within the Monticello PA**

Ownership	Acres
BLM	1,785,127
Navajo Nation Reservation	1,270,060
Ute Reservation *	8,416
National Park Service (NPS)	528,565
Private	353,516
SITLA	202,318
USFS	319,933
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,467,935</b>

\*This acreage does not include Ute allotments or interspersed tribal lands in the South Cottonwood or Allen Canyon area. These acreages are included in the private land total.

Source: BLM 2004a.

The Monticello PA is known for its topographic diversity, extraordinarily striking landforms, and scenic attractions. It contains a wide variety of cultural and paleontological resources with numbers and concentrations of sites exceeding those found elsewhere in the region. The topography is defined largely by high mountains, steep escarpments and ridges, and incised canyons, which are primarily a product of eroded sandstones and exposed igneous intrusions, such as the Abajo and La Sal Mountains. Elevations vary from approximately 3,700 feet above sea level near Lake Powell to over 11,000 feet in the Abajo Mountains. Much of the Monticello PA provides habitat for desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn, Rocky Mountain elk, and mule deer. Numerous raptor species, including bald eagles and peregrine falcons, also live in the area. Fish

species that inhabit the rivers and waterways include humpback chub, Colorado squawfish, and razorback sucker.

Historical and traditional land uses within the Monticello PA, such as livestock grazing, hard-rock mining, and energy and mineral development, continue to be widely practiced. Energy and mineral resources include oil, natural gas, uranium, vanadium, and building stone. However, recreational activities, such as backpacking, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, and sightseeing, are becoming increasingly popular within the PA. Recreational resources provide opportunities for public enjoyment as well as revenue for businesses in and adjacent to the Monticello PA.

### 1.3 PLANNING PROCESS

The FLPMA requires the BLM to use land-use plans (LUPs) as tools by which "present and future use is projected." The FLPMA's implementing regulations for planning, (43 CFR Part 1600), state that LUPs are a preliminary step in the overall process of managing public lands, "designed to guide and control future managements actions and the development of subsequent, more detailed and limited scope plans for resources and uses." Public participation and input are important components of land-use planning. The Monticello FO initiated the process by publishing a notice of intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on June 4, 2003.

The RMP planning process can be broken down into the following nine steps:

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| Step 1 | Scoping and identifying issues, concerns, and opportunities  |
| Step 2 | Development of planning criteria/legislative constraints   |
| Step 3 | Collection of inventory data and information   |
| Step 4 | Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS)   |
| Step 5 | Formulation of alternatives  |
| Step 6 | Estimation of effects of alternatives  |
| Step 7 | Selection of preferred management plan. This step includes preparation and public distribution of the Draft RMP/EIS. |
| Step 8 | Selection of the RMP; this step involves preparation and public distribution of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS           |
| Step 9 | Monitoring and evaluation  |

The major documents produced during the RMP preparation process include the following:

- Preplanning Analysis
- Scoping Report
- Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS)
- Draft RMP/EIS, which included the Preferred Alternative
- Proposed RMP/Final EIS
- Record of Decision (ROD) and approved RMP

### **1.3.1 SCOPING AND IDENTIFYING ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT ALTERNATIVES AND PROPOSED PLAN**

Public scoping is a process designed to meet the public-involvement requirements of the FLPMA and NEPA. Public input helps focus management analysis and actions. During scoping, concerns are raised, and important issues are prioritized for analysis. Information gathered is carefully considered and used to develop land-use allocations or alternative management plans to protect natural, historical, or cultural resource values and provide recreational and commercial opportunities. This process includes working closely with cooperating agencies (state and local governments and other federal agencies) and soliciting input from interested organizations and individuals on issues, concerns, needs, and resource uses, development, and protection.

The scoping period for the Monticello RMP began on June 4, 2003, with publication of the NOI in the Federal Register and ended on January 31, 2004. Scoping included scheduled public meetings in six communities (Green River, Moab, Monticello, Blanding, and Salt Lake City, Utah; and Grand Junction, Colorado). In addition to the meetings, comments were solicited from the public via a website, mail, and staff, who traveled to popular recreation locations within the PA. For the Monticello planning process, comments from the public were categorized in one of three ways:

- Issues to be addressed in the Monticello RMP;
- Issues to be addressed through policy or administrative action (and therefore not addressed in the RMP); and
- Issues beyond the scope of the RMP.

During scoping, all stakeholders were given the opportunity to voice concerns, identify issues, and nominate Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). Additionally, discussions with BLM resource specialists identified management concerns. All the information obtained was used to define the relevant issues to be addressed in a broad range of alternative management scenarios. The environmental impacts of these alternatives were analyzed and addressed in the DEIS and are carried forward into this document along with the Proposed Plan.

The RMP revision process provides the BLM, its cooperators, and the public the opportunity to resolve resource-management conflicts or concerns and respond to opportunities that fulfill the BLM's multiple-use, resource-management mission. Such issues may be identified as local, state, or national, or they may reflect conditions specific to the Monticello PA. Here are the planning issues that are addressed in the Monticello RMP.

#### **1.3.1.1 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The planning area is known for its extraordinarily high density of cultural resources, particularly Anasazi sites, many of which are yet to be recorded. Changes in legislation governing the cultural resource management on federal lands or associated with federal projects have been implemented since the publication of the 1991 RMP. Other laws and regulations regarding tribal-government sovereignty and orientation between governments did not exist during development of the 1991 RMP. Cultural resources provide a direct link between Native Americans and their past, and they request protection for these resources.

The RMP provides an opportunity to enhance cultural-resource management within the PA and address tribal concerns and values in compliance with new requirements. Issues include the following:

- Conflicts between OHV use and other forms of recreation with the need for protection of cultural resources as required by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, Section 106);
- Need for an OHV travel plan limiting use to designated trails to prevent impact to cultural resources;
- Impact on cultural resources created by increasing demand for access to public lands;
- Need for additional access to public lands by Native Americans for their traditional uses and practices;
- Resolution of the increasing conflict between other land uses (such as recreation activities, livestock grazing, woodcutting, and energy exploration and development) and protection and preservation of cultural resources;
- Protection of sensitive cultural resources;
- National Historic Trails management (Old Spanish National Historic Trail and Hole in the Rock Trail) in compliance with enabling legislation to protect the historic resource; and
- Revise existing management actions on Butler Wash, Cedar Mesa, and Hovenweep ACECs, and limit recreation use that has adverse effects on cultural resources.

#### **1.3.1.2 MINERALS AND ENERGY RESOURCES**

There are a number of concerns regarding the level of oil, natural gas, and hard-rock mining activities within the planning area:

- Resolving the impact of surface disturbances from mineral exploration and development on other resources and uses (particularly cultural and visual resources; wildlife, and recreation) while remaining in compliance with federal energy policies
- Improving mitigation standards for reclamation and restoration following mineral development;
- Making oil and natural gas development compatible with dispersed and remote recreational opportunities;
- Identifying areas which require mineral withdrawal to resolve conflicts between resource development and special protection for cultural and water resources, wildlife habitat, unique geologic formations, or high scenic values;
- Making development of alternative energy resources compatible with other resource decisions;
- Determining social and economic impacts of mineral development on the governments and citizens of the counties within the Monticello PA;
- Determining social and economic impacts of mineral development on a PA that contains extraordinary scenic and visual resources;
- Determining impacts of mineral development (nighttime lighting) on the quality of the scenic and wilderness experience;

- Managing and developing oil and natural gas resources on the McCracken Split Estate; consider mitigation which will foster energy production while protecting other resource values and uses;
- Managing and developing oil and natural gas resources in Lockhart Basin to limit impact on the outstanding scenic values of the area, as viewed from both within the basin and adjacent public lands and national parks.

#### **1.3.1.3 NON-WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA) LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

Management of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics is being considered in this land-use planning process for those lands that the BLM has determined have wilderness characteristics. Pursuant to the FLPMA and the *Land-use Planning Handbook* (BLM 2005a), the BLM may not establish new WSAs, but may consider managing non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics through land-use planning, and has the option to manage such lands in a way that would maintain, protect, or preserve some or all of those characteristics. This may include protecting certain lands in their natural condition and providing outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

#### **1.3.1.4 RECREATION**

Recreation use in the Monticello PA has continued to grow in popularity since the approval of the 1991 RMP. The wide range of recreational opportunities available and the spectacular scenery, both within the PA and in the nearby national parks and monuments, draws many visitors to the area. With the number of visitors continuing to grow, recreation activity is expanding deeper into the backcountry, and resource and user conflicts are becoming more common, intense, and difficult to manage. Recreation resource issues to be addressed in the planning process include:

- Managing OHV use by developing a travel plan with maps showing motorized (single-track vehicles, ATVs, jeeps, etc.) and nonmotorized (equestrian, hiking, biking) travel trail systems to identify recreation opportunities, prevent conflicts among recreation users, and minimize adverse impacts to sensitive resources (cultural resources, wildlife and their habitat, etc.);
- Developing specific management plans for high-use areas, including Dark Canyon, Cedar Mesa, Hole in the Rock, the San Juan River, and the Colorado River, that manage use, provide opportunities, and minimize conflicts with other resource values and uses;
- Developing management plans for the Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) and manage actions within the Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA) that provide the desired activities, settings, experiences, and benefits (benefits-based management) consistent with the objectives of recreation management;
- Resolving recreation-related human health and safety problems, including hazardous road conditions, disposal of human waste, and protection of water quality;
- Managing visitors to adjacent national parks and monuments who use public lands in the Monticello PA (visitor management is needed to maintain desired environments and facilities, resolve conflicts among users and minimize impacts to other resources);

- Alleviating impacts of other resource uses on recreation opportunities, including motorized and nonmotorized travel, livestock grazing, mineral development, and fire management;
- Instituting a private permit system to promote the optimum recreation experience and resolve issues caused by growing recreation use;
- Resolving conflicts between private and commercial river users and establish use limits to enhance recreation experiences and protect other resource values; and
- Minimizing impacts of increasing backcountry recreation use on other resource values and reduce tension among recreation users.

#### **1.3.1.5 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS**

The existing RMP does not reflect the current level of use and the demands on certain resources, including ACECs, Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs), and WSAs within the Monticello PA. The regulations and BLM's policy require that consideration be given to designation and protection of ACECs during land-use planning. Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act directs federal agencies involved in planning the water use and development of water and related land resources to consider their potential for national wild, scenic and recreational river areas. The Monticello FO will review all current special designations, as well as other lands within the PA that meet special-designation criteria, and determine the appropriate management for them.

The WSAs in the PA were created under FLPMA Section 603 and continue to be managed in accordance with the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands under Wilderness Review (IMP) to protect their values. This planning process, however, will establish OHV categories (closed or limited) and VRM class objectives within WSAs. No new WSAs will be established, and no existing ones will be altered. The only planning designations made for WSAs will be to determine OHV categories and VRM class objectives.

Concerns about designation and management of special areas encompass issues that pertain to all other resources, depending on the location. Issues and concerns in these areas include pressures from increased visitation and resource development on cultural resources, biodiversity, and habitat and access questions. If special designation is required to protect sensitive resources, the plan considers how these restrictions impact development of minerals and other surface-disturbing activities?

#### **1.3.1.6 TRAVEL**

Since the existing RMP was approved, travel within the Monticello PA has increased. Travel access and use levels are creating conflicts with natural and cultural resources and among different forms of travel (motorized, nonmotorized, non-mechanized, and OHVs). The BLM's guidance for OHV use and travel has changed, and policy requires that comprehensive travel-management planning address all travel modes and conditions, as well as the travel needs of all resource programs administered by the Monticello FO. Travel-related issues include:

- Creating a travel plan with maps showing motorized and nonmotorized use;
- Defining OHV categories compatible with other resource decisions;

- Resolving OHV use conflicts and identifying recreation opportunities, preventing conflicts among recreation users, and minimizing adverse impacts to sensitive resources (cultural and riparian resources, wildlife and their habitat, etc.);
- Resolve conflicts among groups, such as nonmotorized and motorized users, river runners and OHV users, and commercial and private users, and regulating OHV use and camping; and
- Incorporating the BLM OHV national strategy and Utah OHV strategy into planning efforts.

#### **1.3.1.7 VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (VRM) CLASS DESIGNATIONS**

Visual resource management (VRM) class designations are a planning concern, especially considering the diversity of landscapes in the Monticello PA. The 1991 RMP does not address cumulative impacts of recreational activities, livestock grazing, and oil and gas exploration and development on visual resources. Also the 1991 RMP does not reflect increases in recreation visitation or changes in visitor use patterns, which ultimately intensify encroachment into scenic areas. Issues related to VRM include the following:

- Reviewing and establishing VRM class designations that reflect changes in recreation visitation and other resource uses;
- Studying the impact of increasing OHV use on landscapes and visual resources throughout the PA and limit OHV use to roads and trails; and
- Investigating the impact of mineral development (nighttime lighting) on landscapes in remote areas.

#### **1.3.1.8 WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES**

The current RMP does not reflect modifications in crucial habitat boundaries, habitat fragmentation, or raptor protection guidelines. The various goals, objectives, and management plans for wildlife and their habitat in the 1991 plan need to reflect these changes. This planning process will establish desired future conditions and address wildlife and fisheries concerns, including the following:

- Addressing impacts of other resource uses (e.g., livestock grazing, recreation activities, OHV use) on wildlife and their habitat;
- Protecting riparian habitat;
- Investigating the impact of increased recreation use, primarily camping and OHVs, on riparian areas;
- Increasing quality habitat for fish;
- Determining the impact of other resource uses on wildlife habitat fragmentation;
- Protecting sage-grouse habitat along with other resource uses of public lands and explore the possibility of buffer zones around leks;
- Establishing seasonal restrictions on mineral extraction and visitor use to protect species during sensitive periods;
- Assessing the impact of fire management on wildlife habitat and populations;



- Discovering the causes for the decline in bighorn sheep and pronghorn populations and new habitat areas;
- Protecting new habitat areas, particularly for Lockhart Basin bighorn sheep;
- Investigating the impact of drought on the declining quality of existing wildlife habitat; and
- Assessing the impact of increasing antler-collection activities (presence and noise of people and vehicles, cross-country OHV travel, and related surface and vegetation disturbance) on wildlife populations and their habitat.

#### **1.3.1.9 OTHER ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

In addition to the issues already identified for resolution in this planning process, Appendix C of the BLM's *Land-use Planning Handbook* (BLM 2005a) requires that a variety of other decisions be made. The following is a brief description of these issues, concerns, and opportunities. For a more detailed discussion, please refer to the scoping report (BLM 2004b).

Air quality within the Monticello PA may be impacted by increases in vehicle emissions, as well as smoke from prescribed and naturally caused wildland fires and other surface-disturbing activities.

The planning process provides the opportunity to incorporate the Utah LUP amendment for fire and fuels management into the RMP.

The RMP will identify lands for retention, disposal, and acquisition. The plan will designate utility corridors and communication sites, as well as lands to avoid and restrict rights-of-way (ROWs).

The RMP will address areas available and unavailable for livestock grazing.

The RMP will establish watershed objectives for the PA and address issues such as sensitive soils; biological soil crusts; soil erosion, salinity, and sedimentation; priority watersheds; floodplains; water quality; and pollution.

The RMP will identify and update special-status species habitat within the PA and establish objectives to manage that habitat for species which include the Mexican Spotted Owl, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Gunnison Sage-grouse. Also included is the protection of aquatic and riparian habitat for these and other listed and candidate species.

Some resource uses (e.g., grazing, mineral development, OHV use, and recreation) can impact the natural function and condition of watersheds. A healthy cover of perennial vegetation stabilizes the soil, increases infiltration, prevents runoff, provides clean water to adjacent streams, and minimizes noxious-weed invasion. The RMP will establish objectives to protect, maintain, and restore upland and riparian vegetation.

The RMP will address a number of woodland issues, including forest health, fuel loading, human-caused wildland fire risks and hazards, desired woodland composition and function, and forest needs/harvesting.

**1.3.1.9.1 ISSUES ADDRESSED THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE OR POLICY ACTION**

Policy or administrative actions include those implemented by the BLM because they are standard operating procedures; because federal law, rule, or regulation requires them; or because they are BLM policy. Administrative actions do not require a planning decision to be implemented.

The following issues raised during scoping are addressed by administrative actions:

- Compliance with existing laws and policies (e.g., FLPMA, NEPA, Endangered Species Act (ESA), American Antiquities Act, Clean Air Act, National Historic Preservation Act);
- Education, enforcement/prosecution, vandalism, and volunteer coordination;
- Consistency with existing federal, state, and local plans;
- Cultural resource management, which includes up-to-date inventories, nondisclosure of sensitive sites, proposal of cultural sites for the National Register of Historic Places, and Native American consultation;
- Management of existing WSAs, which will continue under the IMP (BLM 1995) except for planning decisions, related to VRM class and OHV categories, which will be made in this RMP. Only Congress can release a WSA from consideration. Should all or part of a WSA be released from consideration, proposals in the released area would be examined on a case-by-case basis for consistency with the goals and objectives of the RMP decisions. Actions inconsistent with RMP goals and objectives would be deferred until completion of requisite plan amendments. Because a plan amendment would be required, there is no separate analysis in this LUP to address resource impacts if any WSAs are released.
- Completion of the inventory of riparian and wetland areas and the use of monitoring and mitigation to help protect these resources;
- Recreation-management public outreach and education, including a comprehensive sign system and maps;
- Administration of existing mineral leases, permits, and other authorized uses;
- Wildlife and biodiversity monitoring;
- Air quality monitoring;
- Mitigation measures for approved, site-specific projects;
- Noxious weeds control;
- Establishment of forage use levels, on a site-specific basis, to maintain rangeland health;
- Allocation of forage between livestock and wildlife and the application of specific management practices on allotments within the PA;
- Eligibility standards for specially designated areas;
- Coordination with local, state, and federal agencies; and
- Cooperation with user groups.

### **1.3.1.9.2 ISSUES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS BECAUSE THEY ARE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE PLAN**

Issues beyond the scope of the RMP planning process include all those that do not relate to RMP decisions. They include decisions that are not under the jurisdiction of the Monticello FO or that the BLM cannot resolve as part of the planning process. Issues identified in this category include the following:

- The State of Utah and San Juan and Grand counties may hold valid existing ROWs in the planning area pursuant to Revised Statute (RS) 2477, Act of July 28, 1866, Chapter 262, 8, 14 Stat. 252, 253, *codified at* 43 USC 932. On October 21, 1976, Congress repealed R.S. 2477 through passage of FLPMA. This RMP does not adjudicate, analyze, or otherwise determine the validity of claimed ROWs. However, nothing in the RMP extinguishes any valid ROW, or alters in any way the legal rights the state and counties have to assert and protect RS 2477 rights or to challenge in federal court or other appropriate venue any use restrictions imposed by the RMP that they believe are inconsistent with their rights.
- No new WSAs will be established, and no existing ones will be altered.
- Elimination of grazing, mineral development, and OHV use on all public lands;
- Regulation of activities and uses beyond the jurisdiction of the BLM;
- Revision of existing laws, policies, and regulations;
- Availability of funding and personnel to manage programs, including law enforcement; and
- Consideration of alternative energy sources as substitutes for mineral development.

### **1.3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNING CRITERIA**

Planning criteria are the constraints that guide and direct the RMP planning process, determine the way the planning team approaches alternative development, and help in selecting the Preferred Alternative. These criteria are based on appropriate laws, regulations, and policy, as well as public participation and coordination with cooperating agencies, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes. The planning criteria ensure that the RMP is consistent with the identified issues and concerns and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided.

The planning criteria developed during the preplanning analysis for the Monticello RMP include the following:

- The RMP would recognize valid existing rights, including water rights.
- Decisions made in the RMP would apply only to public lands and resources managed by the BLM.
- The BLM would make all possible attempts to ensure that its management prescriptions and actions are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions (both federal and nonfederal), subject to applicable law and policy.
- Management plans would focus on the relative values of resources.

- The BLM would use the most current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventorying, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies to enhance or restore impaired ecosystems.
- Management of WSAs would continue under the IMP (BLM 1995). Should Congress release all or part of a WSA from consideration, resource management would be consistent with the revised RMP, subject to other constraints on the relevant lands. Should the need arise, the BLM may consider amending the plan consistent with applicable law.
- Utah BLM Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management (adopted in 1997), and Guidelines for Recreation Management (adopted in 2001) would continue to be implemented. The standards and guidelines would apply to all alternatives analyzed in this EIS.
- Decisions regarding OHV use would be consistent with the BLM's National OHV Strategy.
- VRM class designations would be analyzed and modified to reflect present conditions and future needs. Areas where specific land uses need to be modified or restricted to resolve conflicts would be identified.
- Sensitive watersheds would be identified, and watershed conditions would be determined. Emphasis would be placed on watersheds identified as high priority in conjunction with other cooperators such as the Utah State Division of Water Quality and the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum.
- Baseline reasonable foreseeable development scenarios would be prepared based on historical, existing, and projected levels for selected resource programs.
- Planning would include preserving, conserving, and enhancing of important historical, cultural, paleontological, and natural components of public-land resources. Native American tribal coordination would be maintained to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage.
- Endangered-species recovery goals would be addressed and would include plans to reintroduce endangered and other species. In accordance with the Interagency Memorandum of Agreement on the ESA regarding Section 7 consultation, the BLM would jointly prepare a programmatic consultation agreement with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
- The socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives would be analyzed.
- Vegetation management objectives or desired future conditions would be developed for all parts of the PA.

### **1.3.3 COLLECTION OF INVENTORY DATA AND INFORMATION**

Monticello FO resource specialists have collected inventory data and resource information to provide the basis for preparing the RMP. When available, new information will be used in analyzing the EIS alternatives and making planning decisions.

Geographic information systems (GIS) have been and will be used throughout the EIS analysis to store, display, and analyze resource information and data, including acreage calculations, site locations, maps, and areas of potential conflicts over resource use. After completion and approval of the RMP, this GIS information will continue to be used for resource management

and activity and project planning, and additional updated resource data will continue to be collected and entered into the GIS.

Other documents prepared to help guide the development of this RMP include the following:

- The Mineral Potential Report (BLM 2005b)
- The Scoping Report (BLM 2004b)
- Analysis of the Management Situation (BLM 2005c)
- Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario for Oil and Gas (BLM 2005d)
- ACEC Evaluations for Existing and Nominated ACECs (BLM 2005e)
- Wild and Scenic River Report (BLM 2004c)
- Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Evaluations (BLM 2007a)

#### **1.3.4 ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT SITUATION (AMS)**

The AMS describes the existing status and management of resources and facilities within the Monticello PA. It provides an analysis of the management programs administered by the Monticello FO, assesses the capability of resources to meet current demands, and assesses the adequacy of current management practices. Where no management concerns or conflicts are identified, current management practices are carried forward into the Proposed RMP. Any identified problems or concerns involving resource allocations, land use, or management practices are resolved through this EIS process. Copies of the AMS for the current planning process are available for public review at the Monticello FO and the BLM Utah state office in Salt Lake City.

#### **1.3.5 PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (DRMP) AND DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)**

The draft stage of the RMP comprises alternative formulation, analysis, impacts disclosure, and selection of a Preferred Alternative.

The No-Action Alternative described in the DEIS is management under the current RMP, plus subsequent planning documents and amendments. As required by CEQ regulations, alternative actions are formulated to represent a reasonable range of management options that emphasize certain uses or resource values over others under the multiple-use and sustained-yield mandate of the FLPMA to achieve certain goals or objectives (see Section 1.3.1., Scoping and Identifying Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities). The NEPA requires the BLM to analyze and disclose the effects of the various alternatives. Based on that analysis, the BLM identified and recommended Alternative C as the Preferred Alternative. This is documented in the Draft RMP/EIS, which was distributed to the public for review and comment from November 2, 2007, to February 14, 2008.

#### **1.3.6 SELECTION OF THE PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (PRMP)/FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (FEIS)**

Following review and analysis of public and internal comments and further coordination with the Cooperating Agencies on the Draft RMP/EIS, the BLM has made adjustments as warranted and has crafted a Proposed RMP. In developing the Proposed RMP and FEIS, an alternative in its entirety or a combination of components of the various alternatives presented may be brought forward. Regulations (43 CFR §§1610.3-2(e) and 1610.5-2, respectively), provide, prior to the

approval of the Proposed RMP, a 60-day period for the governor of Utah to make a "consistency review" and a 30-day period for "any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval" of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS to protest to the BLM director. These two periods will run concurrently upon release of the PRMP/FEIS.

### **1.3.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring is the repeated measurement of activities and conditions over time. Evaluation is a process in which the plan and monitoring data are reviewed to see if management goals and objectives are being met and if management direction is sound. Monitoring data gathered over time are examined and used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are meeting stated objectives, and if not, why. Conclusions are used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or determine changes needed in management practices to meet objectives.

Two types of monitoring tied to the planning process include implementation and effectiveness monitoring. Land-use plan monitoring is the process of (1) tracking the implementation of land-use planning decisions and (2) collecting and assessing data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land-use planning decisions. The two types of monitoring are described below.

- **Implementation Monitoring:** Implementation monitoring is the most basic type of monitoring and simply determines whether planned activities have been implemented in the manner prescribed by the plan. Some agencies call this compliance monitoring. This monitoring documents BLM's progress toward full implementation of the LUP decision. There are no specific thresholds or indicators required for this type of monitoring.
- **Effectiveness Monitoring:** Effectiveness monitoring is aimed at determining if the implementation of activities has achieved the desired goals and objectives. Effectiveness monitoring asks the question: Was the specified activity successful in achieving the objective? This requires knowledge of the objectives established in the RMP as well as indicators that can be measured. Indicators are established by technical specialists in order to address specific questions and thus avoid collection of unnecessary data. Success is measured against the benchmark of achieving desired future conditions established by the plan.

Regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-9) require that the proposed plan establish intervals and standards, as appropriate, for monitoring and evaluation of the plan, based on the sensitivity of the resource decisions involved. Progress in meeting the plan objectives and adherence to the management framework established by the plan is reviewed periodically. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA state that agencies may provide for monitoring to assure that their decisions are carried out and should do so in important cases (40 CFR 1505.2[c]). To meet these requirements, the BLM will review the plan on a regular schedule in order to provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and provide information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation.

Land-use plan evaluations will be used by BLM to determine if the decisions in the RMP, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, are still valid. Evaluation of the RMP will generally be conducted every five years per BLM policy, unless unexpected actions, new

information, or significant changes in other plans, legislation, or litigation triggers an evaluation. Land-use plan evaluations determine whether decisions are being implemented, whether mitigation measures are satisfactory, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, whether there are new data of significance to the plan, and whether decisions should be changed through amendment or revision. Evaluations will follow the protocols established by the BLM Land-use Planning Handbook H-1601-1 in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated. Specific monitoring and evaluation needs are identified by resource/uses throughout Chapter 2.

## **1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS**

This planning process must recognize the many ongoing programs, plans, and policies that are being implemented in the Monticello PA by other land managers and government agencies. The BLM will seek to be consistent or complementary with other management actions whenever possible. Plans and policies that need to be considered during the Monticello planning effort are outlined below.

### **1.4.1 STATE OF UTAH PLANS**

- SITLA cooperative agreement and other plans
- Canyonlands Natural History Association cooperative agreement
- Regional plans of the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT)
- State of Utah plans relating to wildlife habitat and watershed management
- Utah's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
- Utah's Smoke Management Plan
- Utah's State Implementation Plan
- Utah's Nonpoint Source Management Plan
- Utah's Sensitive Species List
- Utah's List of Impaired Waters (303 d)
- Utah's Water Resources Planning for the Future
- Utah's Water Plan: Southeast Colorado River Basin
- Utah's Rules for Edge of the Cedars State Park Museum and Gooseneck State Park
- Utah's Big Horn Sheep Statewide Management Plan
- San Juan Elk Management Plan
- Statewide Management Plan for Elk

### **1.4.2 COUNTY LAND-USE PLANS**

- San Juan County, Utah: San Juan County Master Plan (2008)
- Grand County, Utah: Grand County General Plan Update (2004)

### **1.4.3 OTHER FEDERAL PLANS**

- Canyonlands National Park Natural Resource Management Plan (1994)
- Canyonlands National Park General Management Plan (1974)
- Canyonlands National Park Backcountry Management Plan (1984, 1995)

- Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Strategic Plans for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Rainbow Bridge National Monument (2005, 2007)
- Hovenweep National Monument Plan (draft)
- Glen Canyon NRA Grazing Management Plan (1999)
- Glen Canyon NRA Minerals Management Plan (1980)
- Cooperative Management Strategies: Hovenweep National Monument, Colorado-Utah (1987)
- Canyon of the Ancients Monument-Resource Management Plan (draft)
- San Juan-San Miguel Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Moab Resource Management Plan (draft)
- Richfield Resource Management Plan (draft)
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Management Plan (2000)

#### **1.4.4 ENERGY POLICY AND CONSERVATION ACT (EPCA)**

In May 2001, the Comprehensive National Energy Policy was issued, which directed the secretary of the interior to "...examine land status and lease stipulation impediments to federal oil and gas leasing, and review and modify those where opportunities exist (consistent with the law, good environmental practice and balanced use of other resources)" (NEPDG 2001).

Under this directive, the assistant secretary of the Interior for Lands and Minerals Management delivered to Congress an inventory of U.S. oil and gas resources in five western basins, as well as the extent and nature of any restrictions or impediments to their development. This report was prepared at the request of Congress under the provisions of the 2000 Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) (BLM 2003a).

In April 2003, the BLM specified four EPCA integration principles, as follows:

- Environmental protection and energy production are both desirable and necessary objectives of sound land management and are not to be considered mutually exclusive priorities.
- The BLM must ensure appropriate accessibility to energy resources necessary for the nation's security while recognizing that special and unique non-energy resources can be preserved.
- Sound planning will weigh relative resource values, consistent with the FLPMA.
- All resource impacts, including those associated with energy development and transmission will be mitigated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation (BLM 2003a).

#### **1.4.5 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR AND U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE: IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 225 OF THE ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005 REGARDING GEOTHERMAL LEASING AND PERMITTING**

The purpose of this MOU is to facilitate interagency coordination and establish policies and procedures to implement Section 225 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Public Law 109-58 (hereinafter, the Act). Section 225 requires the coordination of geothermal leasing and permitting



on public lands and National Forest Service (NFS) lands between the secretaries of the interior and agriculture.

#### **1.4.6 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE**

The purpose of this MOU is to establish joint BLM and USFS policies and procedures for managing oil and gas leasing and operational activities pursuant to oil and gas leases on NFS lands, consistent with applicable law and policy. The MOU was signed in 2006 for the purpose of efficient, effective compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The MOU establishes the roles of the USFS and the BLM in processing applications for permits to drill and review of subsequent operations.

#### **1.4.7 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

The purpose of this MOU is to establish joint BLM and National Park Service policies and procedures for administer livestock grazing leases, subject to the values and purposes of Glen Canyon NRA lands.

#### **1.4.8 OIL SHALE AND TAR SANDS LEASING PROGRAMMATIC EIS (PEIS)**

The Monticello FO contains areas of tar sands. This resource has been, and currently is, available for lease under the Combined Hydrocarbon Leasing Act of 1981 and in accordance with the decisions in the existing BLM LUPs/amendments.

These major tar-sand resources lie only in Utah within 11 designated special tar-sands areas (STSAs) managed by the BLM Vernal, Price, Richfield, and Monticello FOs. One of these STSAs lies within the Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument, where leasing is prohibited. The Monticello FO manages one of the remaining 10 STSAs.

When the Monticello RMP revision was initiated in 2002, there was no reasonable foreseeable development expectation for tar sands. The mineral report identified this resource but did not expect any leasing or development due to prevailing and anticipated economic factors.

After the start of this RMP revision, Congress enacted the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Section 369 of the Energy Policy Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to "complete a programmatic environmental impact statement for a commercial leasing program for oil shale and tar sands resources on public lands, with an emphasis on the most geologically prospective lands within each of the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming." On December 13, 2005, the BLM published a NOI in the Federal Register initiating a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to support a commercial oil-shale and tar-sands leasing program on federal lands in these three states.

In light of this statutory requirement, all decisions related to tar-sands leasing in this RMP are being deferred to the ongoing PEIS on oil-shale and tar-sands leasing. In the event that the ROD on the final PEIS on oil shale and tar sands is issued before one for the Monticello Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the decisions in the oil-shale and tar-sands ROD will be incorporated into the Monticello RMP.

Combined hydrocarbon and tar-sand leasing in the STSAs will also be deferred to the PEIS. Additional opportunities for public involvement and comment will occur when the draft of the PEIS becomes available. Site-specific requirements will be addressed in future NEPA analysis for particular project applications after the PEIS is completed. This RMP will, however, develop allocation decisions for conventional oil and gas leasing in the STSAs.

#### **1.4.9 THE ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005 AND THE WESTERN ENERGY CORRIDOR**

An interagency West-wide energy corridor PEIS is currently being developed to implement Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Energy Right-of-way Corridors on federal land). The final West-wide energy corridor PEIS will amend RMPs in the western U.S., providing decisions to address numerous energy corridor issues, including the utilization of existing corridors (with enhancements and upgrades) and the identification of new ones, supply and demand considerations, and compatibility with other corridor and project-planning efforts. It is likely that the identification of corridors in the West-wide energy corridor PEIS will affect the Monticello PA. Consequently, the decisions in the ROD on the final West-wide energy corridor PEIS will be incorporated into the Monticello RMP.

#### **1.4.10 ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY PLANS**

- The Recovery Implementation Plan for the Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin (USFWS 1987)
- Bonytail Chub Recovery Plan (USFWS 1984, 1990a, 2002a)
- Humpback Chub Recovery Plan (USFWS 1979, 1990a, 2002b)
- Colorado Pikeminnow Recovery Plan (USFWS 1978, 1990, 1991, 2002c)
- Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan (USFWS 1995)
- Razorback Sucker Recovery Plan (USFWS 1999, 2002d)
- Final Recovery Plan for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (USFWS 2002e)

#### **1.4.11 EXISTING EISS**

- Utah Combined Hydrocarbon Leasing Regional Final EIS (1984)
- Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness EIS (1990)
- Programmatic EIS on Wind Energy Development on BLM-administered Lands in the Western United States (BLM 2005f)
- Final Environmental Impact Statement Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States and associated Records of Decision (1991).
- Final Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Associated Record of Decision (2007).
- Final Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (2007).

#### **1.4.12 OTHER BLM PLANS**

- Red Canyon/White Canyon Habitat Management Plan (1990)
- Beef Basin Habitat Management Plan (1992)

- Hatch Point Habitat Management Plan (1976)
- Fire Management Plan Amendment (2005)
- San Juan County Landfill Plan Amendment (1995)
- Montezuma Creek River Basin Study (1992)
- Grand Gulch Plateau Cultural and Recreation Area Management Plan (1993)
- Indian Creek Corridor Plan (2005)
- East Canyon Allotment Management Plan (1993)
- Tank Draw Allotment Management Plan (1993)
- Gunnison Sage-grouse Range-wide Conservation Plan (2005)

## 1.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PLAN

This section provides a brief description of the Proposed Plan, which presents opportunities to use and develop resources within the planning area while ensuring resource protection. The Proposed Plan would provide for continued access to and development of resources with stipulations and mitigation to protect natural and cultural resources.

As identified in Table 2.1, key resource decisions on public lands include but are not limited to the following:

- **Air Quality:** Work cooperatively with state, federal, and tribal entities in developing air quality assessment protocols to address cumulative impacts and regional air quality issues.
- **Cultural Resources:** Authorizations for land and resource use would comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), consistent with and subject to the objectives established in the RMP for the proactive use of cultural properties in the public interest. Consultations with Native American tribes would occur to identify, protect, and maintain access for areas of traditional and religious use that include but are not limited to burials, rock art, traditional use areas, religiously active areas, and sacred sites.
- **Fire Management:** Adopts the comprehensive Utah LUP amendment for fire and fuels management of September 2005, which addresses activities associated with ESR, prevention/mitigation, fuels treatment, wildfire use, suppression, and priorities.
- **Health and Safety:** Ensures that human health and safety concerns on the public lands are appropriately mitigated if it is determined hazardous materials waste (including abandoned mines) are present.
- **Lands and Realty:** Defines exclusion and avoidance areas for ROWs and outlines processes for filming, Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP), trespass resolution, access, easements, land tenure adjustments, transportation, and utility corridors and withdrawals.
- **Livestock Grazing:** Manages grazing according to Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management. Maintains lands currently unavailable for livestock grazing (due to vegetation, recreation, wildlife, or other concerns) and existing land treatments. Also addressed is utilization, unavailable areas, preference relinquishment, season of use and forage. Makes 1,621,515 acres available to grazing and 134,277 acres unavailable to grazing.
- **Minerals:** Provides for a variety of mineral exploration and development activities.

- **Mineral Entry:** Maintains 1,734,458 acres as available to mineral entry and recommends 50,665 acres for withdrawal from mineral entry
- **Mineral Disposal:** Makes 624,734 acres available with standard terms and conditions and 724,234 acres available with special conditions.
- **Oil and Gas Leasing:** Open with standard terms and conditions 495,431 acres; open with moderate terms and conditions (controlled surface use and timing limitations) 732,476 acres; open with no surface occupancy 50,942 acres; and closed to leasing 491,553 acres.
- **Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:** Manages 88,871 acres for wilderness characteristics in Dark Canyon (11,540 acres), Mancos Mesa (30,068 acres), Nokai Dome West (14,988 acres), Nokai Dome East (18,618 acres), and Grand Gulch (13,657 acres).
- **Paleontology:** In areas where surface disturbance, either initiated by BLM or by other land users, may threaten substantial or noteworthy fossils, BLM would follow its policy per *Paleontology Resources Management Manual and Handbook 8370-1* (BLM 1998a) to assess any threat and mitigate damage.
- **Recreation:** Outlines guidelines, general decisions, existing/future facilities, launch limits, commercial/private allocations, visitor services, campsites, campfires, wood collection, non-boating use, grazing, watershed, pet/stock animals and general policies regarding SRPs (commercial and competitive). Approximately 562,824 acres are included within 7 SRMAs: San Juan River (9,859 acres); Dark Canyon (30,820 acres); White Canyon (2,828 acres); Tank Bench (2,646 acres); Beef Basin (20,302 acres); Indian Creek (89,271 acres); and Cedar Mesa (407,098 acres), which includes management zones for Grand Gulch NHL (37,388 acres), Comb Ridge (38,012 acres), and McLoyd Canyon–Moon House (1,607 acres).
- **Riparian:** Develops strategies and restrictions necessary to meet or maintain Proper Functioning Condition (PFC). Develops seasonal restrictions, closures, and/or forage utilization limits on grazing in riparian areas considered "functioning at risk." Temporarily closes riparian areas considered functioning at risk to dispersed motorized camping until PFC is restored.
- **Soil and Water:** Emphasizes management of watershed health and sensitive soils by addressing surface-disturbing activities and slope limits.
- **Special Designations:** Designates, modifies, and manages areas as ACECs where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards. Approximately 73,492 acres are included within seven ACECs: 1) Alkali Ridge (Cultural) 39,196 acres; 2) Hovenweep (Cultural) 2,439 acres; 3) Indian Creek (Scenic) 3,905; 4) Lavender Mesa (Relic Vegetation) 649 acres; 5) San Juan River (Scenic, Cultural, Wildlife, & Natural Systems) 4,321 acres; 6) Shay Canyon (Cultural) 119 acres; and 7) Valley of the Gods (Scenic) 22,863 acres.
- **Special Designations:** Identifies eligible WSR segments that would be managed according BLM Manual 8351, Wild and Scenic Rivers–Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management. Approximately 35.7 miles are included within four eligible WSR segments: Colorado River Segment 2 (5.5 miles/880 acres);

Colorado River Segment 3 (6.5 miles/1,040 acres); Dark Canyon (6.4 miles/2,048 acres); and San Juan River Segment 5 (17.3 miles/2,768 acres).

- **Special Designations:** Manages 13 WSAs (391,599 acres): Mancos Mesa (51,440 acres), Grand Gulch ISA Complex (105,520 acres), Road Canyon (52,420 acres), Fish Creek Canyon (46,440 acres), Mule Canyon (5,990 acres), Cheesebox Canyon (15,410 acres), Dark Canyon ISA Complex (68,030 acres), Butler Wash (24,190 acres), Bridger Jack Mesa (5,290 acres), Indian Creek (6,870 acres), South Needles (160 acres), Squaw and Papoose Canyons (6,676 acres), and Cross Canyon (1,008 acres)..
- **Special Status Species:** Avoidance and minimization measures would be used for all surface-disturbing activities to comply with the ESA, the BLM state director's sensitive plant and animal species, and the BLM Manual 6840, Special Status Species Management.
- **Travel Management:** Designates 1,388,191 acres as "limited to designated routes," and 393,895 acres as "closed." Special seasonal stipulations are applied to Arch Canyon and the last portion of the route past the state section to McLoyd Canyon–Moon House would be closed.
- **Vegetation:** Manages seed gathering, identifies vegetation treatments, and controls invasive and non-native weed species.
- **Visual Resource Management:** Activities would comply with VRM management class objectives, unless a waiver, exemption, or modification is granted. Designates PA as Class I (422,989 acres), Class II (228,041 acres), Class III (507,583 acres), and Class IV (623,002 acres).
- **Wildlife and Fisheries:** Discusses protocols for introduction, transplantation, augmentation, reestablishment, animal damage control, habitat improvement/protection, seasonal areas, off-site mitigation and habitat boundaries.
- **Woodlands:** Identifies zones for private/commercial use of woodland products, prioritizes treatments in high value/risk areas and continues permits.

## 1.6 SUMMARY OF CHANGES FROM DRAFT RMP/EIS TO THE PROPOSED PLAN RMP/FINAL EIS

The Draft RMP/EIS was released to the public on November 2, 2007, which initiated a 90-day comment period. Comments were received from the public, cooperators, and other interested parties. See Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination, for details of the public comment process.

As a result of public comment and internal review of the Draft RMP/EIS, the BLM has formulated the Proposed Plan in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The Proposed Plan/RMP consists of a combination of all the alternatives. Changes regarding the Proposed Plan and draft alternatives focused on adjustments in order to address public concerns while continuing to meet the BLM's legal and regulatory mandates. Changes are a result of the following:

- Adjustments to decisions;
- clarifications and cross-tracking to better explain the management proposed in the Draft RMP/EIS;
- updates to information;
- updates to maps; and

- minor corrections, including typographical errors.

A few of the decision changes in the Proposed Plan are outside of the range of alternatives, but are not significant changes that require substantive new analysis. Discussion of these changes is provided below.

### **1.6.1 SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO DECISIONS BETWEEN THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (DRAFT EIS) AND THE PROPOSED PLAN (FINAL EIS)**

- The decisions in the alternatives brought forward have not changed from the Draft RMP, except for minor clarifications and cross-tracking.
- **Air Quality:** New information concerning coordination efforts, responsibilities, and State of Utah requirements concerning air quality emissions has been added to the Common to All section.
- **Cultural Resources:** All Cultural Special Management Areas (CSMA) have been renamed as Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) or Recreation Management Zones (RMA) within SRMAs and moved to the Recreation section of Chapter 2. Name changes include the following:
  - Comb Ridge CSMA = Comb Ridge RMZ within the Cedar Mesa SRMA
  - Tank Bench CSMA = Tank Bench SRMA
  - Beef Basin CSMA = Beef Basin SRMA
  - McLoyd Canyon–Moon House CSMA = McLoyd Canyon–Moon House RMZ within the Cedar Mesa SRMA
  - Grand Gulch National Historic District CSMA = Grand Gulch National Historic District RMZ within the Cedar Mesa SRMA.

No decisions have changed; they have just been moved over to the Recreation section under the SRMAs.

- **Historic Trails:** This whole section has been moved under the Special Designations section.
- **Lands and Realty:** The Common to All portion has been reworded to clarify differences between FLPMA Section 203 and 206 land disposals. The ROW Avoidance and Exclusion areas have been listed out in the Proposed Plan for clarity. Acreage has been adjusted from Alternative C (Preferred Alternative) because five areas outside of WSAs with wilderness characteristics have been added to the Avoidance areas. In addition, the Comb Ridge RMZ, Valley of the Gods ACEC, Indian Creek ACEC, and the Dark Canyon wild and scenic river segment were not carried into the Proposed Plan as mineral withdrawal recommendations.
- **Livestock Grazing:** Language on voluntary relinquishment has been clarified to mirror existing BLM policy. Acreage calculated as unavailable to grazing has been increased by a few thousand acres due to GIS calculations. No decisions have changed.
- **Mineral Resources:** Acreages for lands that are available for leasing under standard lease terms, minor constraints (CSU and TL), major constraints (NSO), and unavailable for leasing have been modified due to a myriad of decisions brought forward into the Proposed Plan from within the range of alternatives. Most notable are the five areas

carried forward to protect their wilderness characteristics (88,871 acres); four of the five areas would be unavailable to leasing, and one would be NSO.

- **Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:** Five areas have been brought forward from Alternative E into the Proposed Plan to protect, preserve and maintain their wilderness characteristics (88,871 acres). There were no non-WSA lands identified for management of those values in the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) in the Draft RMP/EIS. Various management prescriptions have been selected in the Proposed Plan to protect the wilderness characteristics.
- **Recreation:** New prescriptions for Recreation under the Common to All portion of this resource have been added and cross-tracked from the Cultural Section because they are pertinent to the recreation user.
  - The Cedar Mesa Cultural Special Recreation Management Area has been renamed the Cedar Mesa Special Recreation Management Area consistent with existing policy and handbook guidance. Three Recreation Management Zones (RMZs) have been identified within the Cedar Mesa SRMA. These RMZs were identified as Cultural Special Management Areas (CSMAs) in the Cultural Resources section of the Draft RMP alternatives. In the Proposed Plan, they are now the Comb Ridge RMZ, McLoyd Canyon–Moon House RMZ, and the Grand Gulch National Historic District RMZ within the Cedar Mesa SRMA. The Cedar Mesa SRMA gained acreage as a result of adding the Comb Ridge RMZ. All management prescriptions have been carried over from the Cultural Resources section, and no new prescriptions were included.
  - The Tank Bench SRMA and Beef Basin SRMA have been added to the Recreation Section. These areas and their prescriptions were transferred over from the Cultural Resources section where they were identified as Cultural Special Management Areas in the Draft RMP. This is basically a formatting change, and no new decisions have been added based on these changes.
  - In the Dark Canyon SRMA, the limit on group size numbers has been increased from 15 in the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) to 18 in the Proposed Plan. Although this is outside the range of alternatives, it is a minimal change of three persons and would have negligible, if any, impact on the analysis or other decisions in this plan. This change was in response to public comment on industry standards for group size.
  - Within the decision space for the Extensive Recreation Management Area, the Proposed Plan clarified that off-road camping within 150 feet of designated routes would not be allowed in WSAs, non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics (88,871 acres), wild and scenic river corridors, ACECs, and threatened and endangered species habitat. In addition, the limitations on commercial recreational events were cross-tracked and carried into this section from the Cultural Resources section.
- **Soil and Water Resources:** A new guidance statement was added concerning the application of best management practices and mitigation when working in sensitive soil areas in order to be in conformance with current policy.
- **Special Designations:** ACECs

- Alkali Ridge ACEC: Clarified coordination responsibilities with the SHPO, provided more guidance for cultural mitigation, changed the VRM classification from VRM IV (Alternative C) to VRM III (Proposed Plan), changed oil and gas leasing category to minor constraints (CSU). Changing the leasing category appears to be outside of the range of alternatives, however, the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), was incorrectly displayed as open with standard lease terms. The existing San Juan Resource RMP maps all show the Alkali Ridge area to be under a CSU stipulation. This does not affect the analysis to any extent, however, because existing laws, rules, and regulations would require surface-disturbing activities to be mitigated in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, and the CSU stipulation basically reiterates the importance of protecting the cultural resources in the area. The CSU stipulation does not preclude leasing or other surface-disturbing activities in this area. In addition, it was clarified in the Proposed Plan that off-road travel for wood collection would not be allowed in this culturally sensitive area until future level III cultural inventories are completed. In the National Historic District of this ACEC, clarification was added for the term “casual use” for geophysical activities. In addition, it was clarified that campfires would not be allowed in this area.
- Hovenweep ACEC: Clarified coordination responsibilities with the SHPO, provided more guidance for cultural mitigation, changed the VRM classification in the 880 acre visual emphasis zone from VRM III (Alternative C) to VRM II (Proposed Plan). Although this is outside of the range of alternatives, the affect of this change is minimal because this area is and continues to be under a No Surface Occupancy (NSO) leasing stipulation, where surface-disturbing activities are limited.
- In the prescriptions for Bridger Jack Mesa ACEC, Lavender Mesa ACEC, Indian Creek ACEC, Shay Canyon ACEC, and Valley of the Gods ACEC, management decisions have been carried forward and cross-tracked from other portions of the RMP for clarification. The Indian Creek ACEC has changed from an OHV-limited area to closed to OHV use in the Proposed Plan.
- The San Juan River ACEC has been decreased in size because Segment 5 of the San Juan River has been excluded from the ACEC management and added as a wild and scenic river segment under its own management prescriptions in the Proposed Plan. A decision has been added to the ACEC section on livestock grazing that was cross-tracked with the San Juan River SRMA.
- **Special Designations: Wild and Scenic Rivers**
  - The San Juan River wild and scenic river segment 5 (17.3 miles) has been brought forward as a wild-suitable river segment in the Proposed Plan. It would no longer be part of the San Juan River ACEC.
  - Clarification was added in the Common to All section to reiterate that the White Canyon river segment no longer meets the eligibility criteria for wild and scenic river consideration and was not carried forward into the Draft or Proposed Plan.
- **Special Designations: Wilderness Study Areas**
  - Clarification of the two decisions needed for WSAs during this planning process were clearly displayed for both VRM and OHVs.



- **Special Status Species:** Moved much of the specific information on threatened and endangered species into Appendix A, B, and Q. Provided a policy statement concerning the Gunnison prairie-dog and added a map displaying its habitat in the Map section. Changed the year-round habitat seasonal restrictions for the Gunnison Sage-grouse from 6 miles to 4 miles in accordance with the regional Gunnison Sage-grouse plan.
  - In the Mexican Spotted Owl habitat in Arch Canyon, changed the OHV open route distance from 3.8 miles in the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) to 8 miles (to the Forest Service boundary) in the Proposed Plan (with seasonal restrictions for organized and commercial groups).
- **Travel Management:** The Indian Creek and Butler Wash areas that were open to cross-country use (2,311 acres) in the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) would be limited to designated roads and trails in the Proposed Plan.
  - The Arch Canyon route, which was limited to 3.8 miles for OHV use in the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C), is changed to allow for OHV use for 8 miles (to the Forest Service boundary) in the Proposed Plan (with seasonal restrictions for organized and commercial groups).
  - Numerous changes in acreages have been made to all three categories (open, closed, and limited) due to the changes made throughout Chapter 2 between the Draft Preferred Alternative and the Proposed Plan.
  - The seven ways in the WSAs that would be limited to designated roads and trails in the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) have been removed from this section in the Proposed Plan. This is because the Proposed Plan would close all ways in Mancos Mesa, and some remaining routes (four or fewer) in the three WSAs in Cedar Mesa would have temporary, conditional use to limited to trail heads until such time as they can be relocated outside of the WSAs. They would not be “designated” under the Travel Plan.
- **Visual Resource Management:** Minor changes to the VRM acreage appear between the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) and the Proposed Plan, but these are GIS glitches, and all VRM Class I areas remain the same. Changes between VRM Class II and III are attributed to a myriad of changes between the Draft and the Proposed Plan. Only changing the 880 acres in the Hovenweep visual sensitive zone from a VRM III to a VRM II is outside the range of alternatives, and as noted above is not a significant change because the areas was already under an NSO for oil and gas leasing, and also has other restrictive management commensurate with a VRM Class II objective.
- **Wildlife and Fisheries Resources:** Crucial big game habitat boundaries increased in size between the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) in the Draft and the Proposed Plan. In August 2005, the UDWR changed its wildlife habitat classification system. Prior to 2005, the UDWR classification system distinguished between "critical" habitat (an area that provides for biological and/or behavioral requisites necessary to sustain the existence and/or perpetuation of a wildlife population) and "high value" habitat (an area that provides for intensive use by the species). The UDWR has been criticized for using the term "critical," as the same term refers to habitat federally designated by the USFWS as required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
  - In previous BLM planning efforts, mitigation decisions (usually timing stipulations) for impacts to the UDWR's "critical" habitats have been integrated

into the planning process. The BLM rarely incorporated management decisions in its RMPs for "high value" habitats. The UDWR changed its classification system to include "critical" habitat with "high value" habitat, in part to accommodate the limitations of having classifications that were of no practical value to land managers. The new term "crucial" habitat is defined by the UDWR as "habitat on which the local population of a wildlife species depends for survival because there are no alternative ranges or habitats available. Crucial habitat is essential to the life-history requirements of a wildlife species. Degradation or loss of crucial habitat will lead to significant declines in the wildlife population in question."

- Crucial habitat boundaries appear larger on the wildlife maps in this Proposed Plan because they are a combination of the UDWR's old "critical" habitat and "high value" habitat, with some minor modifications. Timing stipulations for each of the species now apply to the whole crucial habitat area. It is important to note, however, that the application of waivers, exceptions, and modifications, as outlined in Appendix A, will be taken into consideration and used where/when applicable for all surface-disturbing activities in these areas. The range of alternatives in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS considered both of the UDWR's old classifications of critical and high-value habitat. Minor boundary modifications have been made by the UDWR prior to incorporating them into crucial habitat boundaries. Because this information was taken into consideration and analyzed in the draft, these minor changes are not considered significant in terms of resource uses and/or analysis in this Proposed Plan, and therefore a supplement to this EIS is not necessary for this purpose.
- References to Appendix A have been added to emphasize the waiver, exception, and modification language that applies to the timing stipulation for these species.
- **Woodlands:** Clarification was added that the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would not be open to woodcutting. In both the North Comb Ridge Woodcutting Zone and the Montezuma Watershed Woodcutting Zone, clarification was added that off-road travel would not be allowed for woodcutting until future Class III surveys for cultural resources have been completed. Vehicles must stay on designated routes only

### 1.6.2 CLARIFICATIONS

In addition to the modifications to the Proposed Plan, information has been updated and language clarified in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in response to questions and comments received on the Draft RMP/EIS. Major clarifications are:

- Identified implementation-level decisions by placing them in italics and asterisking with a footnote.
- **Health and Safety:** Added prescriptions for human health and safety and hazardous materials with associated narratives.
- **Minerals:** Added statement on Best Management Practices (BMPs) under Oil and Gas Leasing.
- **Riparian:** Clarified Management Common to All regarding new surface-disturbing activities to be consistent with BLM riparian policy.

- **Recreation under SRMAs:** Provided additional rationale for the goals and objectives for each SRMA. Clarified that Dark Canyon SRMA would be managed under IMP since it is entirely within the Dark Canyon WSA.
- **Special Status Species:** Removed management prescriptions for individual species under Management Common to All (MCA) because these are listed in Appendix A, B, and Q.
- **Vegetation:** Clarified goals for vegetation management.
- **Lands and Realty:** Clarified "reasonable access" to SITLA lands and that BLM will prioritize SITLA land exchange proposals.
- Cross-tracked decisions from different resource sections of Chapter 2 and brought them forth into appropriate sections for better understanding of the area's management.
- Made numerous minor changes to language and presentation of the information for better internal and public understanding of the decisions.
- Reorganized and reformatted Appendix A to add clarity to the stipulations for surface disturbance.
- Augmented Appendix H to include the threats to relevance and importance criteria for the potential ACECs.

### 1.6.3 UPDATES TO DATA

- The Executive Summary and Chapter 1 have been updated to reflect the Proposed Plan.
- Chapter 2 includes the Proposed Plan as well as all of the Draft Alternatives from the Draft EIS.
- Information was added to Chapters 3 and 4 on global climate change.
- Added air quality data from Canyonlands National Park to Chapter 3.
- Included baseline information on SITLA lands to describe how they interrelate with public lands.
- The Utah State University social survey results were added as an Appendix R.
- Socioeconomic data were updated from the year 2000 to the year 2007. Added updated data on socioeconomics, including severance taxes and property taxes. Added wage distribution for recreation jobs in the socio-economic sections of Chapters 3 and 4.
- The Bald Eagle was removed from Threatened and Endangered Species headings
- Updated conservation measures from the USFWS were added to the Appendices A, B and Q
- A new Appendix T was added to include a letter from State of Utah outlining special requirements for reducing potential impacts on air quality.
- Chapter 4 has been updated to reflect the new analysis for the Proposed Plan
- Chapter 5 has been updated to include county and state consistency tables as well as other pertinent plans. It also includes a description of the process used for assessing public comments, comments provided by Cooperating Agencies and BLM responses, as well as other public comments that required changes to the Proposed Plan. Reference is made to a compact disc (CD) that provides all substantive public comments and BLM response to those comments. The CD provides two databases: one sorted by commenter name and the other sorted by resource concern.

#### **1.6.4 MAP CHANGES**

Most of the maps have had some corrections made to them. Many were in the legend to better clarify the information that was being put forth. Other changes have been made due to internal review and cross-checking and finding discrepancies between the written decisions in Chapter 2 and how those decisions were displayed on the maps through a GIS effort. Added all new maps to portray the allocation decision for the Proposed Plan, Two new map themes not included in the DRMP and added to the Proposed Plan include: 1) ROW Avoidance and Exclusion Areas for the Proposed Plan and 2) Gunnison prairie-dog Habitat.

In addition to the above changes, adjustments were made to correct typographical or grammatical errors, add references, and clarify wording. Changes of this nature are not listed above.

#### **1.6.5 RATIONALE FOR CHANGES AND FINDING OF INSIGNIFICANCE**

The BLM has made numerous changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS. These changes are described above and detailed in Appendix S. The BLM has prepared this appendix to document whether changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS resulted in a significant change in circumstances or conditions, or whether the Proposed RMP/Final EIS contains different information from that which was presented to the public in the Draft RMP/EIS. Finally, the BLM wanted to confirm that the majority of changes made to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS fall within the range of alternatives presented and analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS. As noted in Section 1.1.2.1, four decisions in the Proposed Plan fall outside the range of alternatives but are not significant changes for the reasons provided above. These changes include increasing group size numbers from 15 to 18 in the Dark Canyon SRMA, making the Alkali Ridge ACEC open to leasing under minor constraints versus standard lease terms to further protect the significant cultural resources of the ACEC, changing the VRM classification in the 880 acre Hovenweep visual sensitive zone from a Class III objective to a Class II objective, and increasing the crucial habitat boundary acreage to be in concert with the UDWR. None of these changes meet the test of significance.

The regulation controlling whether or not a supplement is required is found at 40 CFR 1502.9(c), which provides that agencies:

- Shall prepare supplements to either draft or final environmental impact statements if (1) the agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns, or (2) there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impact;
- May also prepare supplements when the agency determines that the purposes of the Act will be furthered by doing so;
- Shall adopt procedures for introducing a supplement into its formal administrative record, if such a record exists; and
- Shall prepare, circulate, and file a supplement to a statement in the same fashion (exclusive of scoping) as a draft and final statement unless alternative procedures are approved by the Council.

All changes to the Monticello Draft RMP/Draft EIS were made in response to public comment and/or internal review. The majority of the changes were editorial and/or format changes made to add clarity to the document. In some cases, alternatives presented in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS

were modified in the PRMP to reflect technical corrections and data updates. In other cases, such as in Chapter 3, Affected Environment, incorporation of updated information was necessary to refine the analysis in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences of Proposed Plan and All Alternatives, that was incomplete or needed augmentation.

None of the changes described above and further detailed in Appendix S meet the regulatory definition for significance in 40 CFR 1508.27(a) and (b). These regulations require an agency preparing a NEPA document to review the changes for significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Proposed Plan or its impacts, using context and intensity as the trigger for significance. The BLM has reviewed each substantive change through this regulatory standard and has determined that none of the changes, individually or collectively, require a supplement to this Final EIS.

## **1.7 NEXT STEPS: COMPLETE RECORD OF DECISION (ROD) AND APPROVED PLAN**

The publication of the ROD and approved RMP completes the RMP planning process. Substantial changes to the proposed plan, due to the governor's review or a protest resolution, will be published and subject to public review prior to final approval. The ROD will include appeal provisions for any implementation decisions in the approved RMP. Monitoring and evaluation are an ongoing step in the planning process.

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